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Frederic L. Mason

A MEMORIAL  
OF  
THEODORE LEWIS MASON, M.D.,

LATE OF BROOKLYN, N. Y.

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## MEMORIAL.

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### I.

IN THE YEAR 1632 there came to the then recently founded town of Boston, Mass., a young Lieutenant of the King's army by the name of John Mason. A younger son of a family of respectable position and property in the county of Shropshire or Salop, on the Welsh borders of England, as was the custom of his times he had left his ancestral home to try his chances as a soldier of fortune, and had served with some distinction with Sir Thomas Fairfax, as a volunteer in the English forces which were the allies of the Dutch Republic during some portion of the Thirty Years' War with Spain.

Returning from the Netherlands, Lieutenant Mason determined to visit the newly-settled colonies of New England, and at the date we have mentioned, landed at Dorchester, Mass., then a little hamlet not far from the main settlement

of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay, but now a pleasant suburban ward of the city of Boston.

After residing there some three years, in company with others he removed to Windsor, on the Connecticut River, a settlement of the Hartford Colony, and there called into frequent requisition his military skill and experience as the defender of the infant colony.

The Pequot tribe of Indians, though at first friendly to the whites, had at this time become very hostile to them, frequently menacing the weaker settlements, and at one time massacring almost the entire population of Wethersfield. After experiencing much danger from them, it was at length determined by the colonists that the safety of their lives and homes demanded the extinction, or at least the crippling, of these savage foes, and an expedition was accordingly fitted out against them, the command of which was given to Captain Mason. Leading a force of some ninety men, under the command of Captain John Underhill and others, and accompanied by several hundred friendly Indians of the Mohegan tribe, under their chief Uncas, in May, 1637, he attacked the fortified camp of the Pequots, near the site of the present town

of Groton, Connecticut. The assault was made in the early dawn, and the Pequots being surprised were unable to resist it. Their defeat was total, their camp burned, and more than six hundred of their warriors perished by the sword or flames. A few were captured, the remnant scattered, and all peril to the Hartford Colony from these dangerous foes was completely and permanently averted.

For these and other valuable services rendered to the colony, Captain Mason was raised to the rank of Major, and subsequently appointed commander-in-chief of all the military forces of the Hartford Colony, in which post of responsibility and honor he continued for upwards of thirty years.

In 1647 Major Mason removed his residence from Windsor to Saybrook, and in 1660, with the Reverend James Fitch and some thirty-five other proprietors, he founded the town of Norwich, on the Thames River, in Connecticut, now a flourishing city of that Commonwealth. He was for years a magistrate, and from 1660 to 1670 was Deputy or Lieutenant-Governor of the colony of Connecticut, and died at his home in Norwich in the year 1672.

NOT quite one hundred years after the death of Major Mason, and in direct descent from him, there was born at Franklin, near Norwich, Conn., David Mason, who became a counsellor-at-law, practising his profession at Cooperstown, Otsego County, N. Y., and afterward at Montgomery, Orange County, N. Y., where he died, having evinced an ability in his chosen work not far inferior to that of his distinguished cousin, the Honorable Jeremiah Mason, of Boston, Mass., who in his day was noted as the successful professional rival at the New Hampshire and Massachusetts bar of Daniel Webster, the veteran statesman cheerfully bearing testimony to Mr. Mason's substantial learning and unusual legal ability.

In 1801 David Mason married Mary Elizabeth, the eldest daughter of the Reverend Doctor Isaac Lewis, of Greenwich, Connecticut, a minister of the Orthodox or Trinitarian Congregational Church, whose position and abilities were such as won for him a respect and influence not ordinarily attained.

He was a graduate of Yale College, in the class of 1765, and while pursuing his studies there was converted under circumstances of

peculiar interest, by the preaching of George Whitefield, the great evangelist.

Entering the ministry, his long and laborious professional life was largely passed in the pastorate of the Second Congregational Church in Greenwich, Connecticut, which he assumed in 1786, and occupied for thirty-two years. He was given the honorary degree of Doctor in Divinity by Yale College in 1792, and in 1816 to 1818 was a member of the Corporation of that Institution, resigning his seat in the Board after having aided in selecting and inducting into office the Reverend Doctor Jeremiah Day, LL.D., as the eighth president of the College.

His daughter partook in no small degree of Doctor Lewis' firmness of disposition, keenness of intellect and uprightness of life, characteristics which were largely transmitted to his grandson, whose younger days were passed under the influence of this venerable and excellent man.

SUCH were the antecedents and immediate ancestors of the subject of this sketch; and if their character and abilities in their various stations of life have been somewhat dwelt upon, it has only been that those traits of mind and

heart which distinguished them may be the more readily traced in their descendant, and that thus the blessing of a pious and intelligent parentage and ancestry may be emphasized in these times, when the worth of such an heritage is too apt to be underestimated.

## II.

THEODORE LEWIS MASON was born September 30th, 1803, in Cooperstown, Otsego County, N. Y., the home of the distinguished Judge Cooper, from whom the village is named, and his still more famous son, J. Fenimore Cooper, whose magic pen clothed the lovely hills and valleys of Central and Western New York with the charm of historic romance, and added a most delightful and instructive chapter to the then newly opened volume of American literature.

Living thus amid those scenes of unusual natural attractiveness which even still distinguish the lake region of Central New York they doubtless had no little influence, even during his earliest years, in implanting in him a deep love for the



beauties of nature which constantly displayed itself in after years, whenever his busy life allowed him an hour of freedom from engrossing cares.

While yet a child, however, he removed to the residence of his maternal grandfather, the Reverend Doctor Lewis, at Greenwich, Conn., where his youth and early manhood were spent. Receiving a thorough training in English and classical studies under the direction of various teachers, and notably in the private school of the Reverend Platt Buffett, of Stanwich, Conn., he early determined to follow the medical profession, and with that object in view commenced his studies under the preceptorship of Doctor Darius Mead, of Greenwich, Conn., combining, as was the custom at that time, the study of the appropriate text-books with the clinical instructions of his preceptor at the bedside of the sick. After a preliminary course of this nature, the young student repaired to New York City, and entering his name in the office of the celebrated Doctor David Hosack, matriculated in the College of Physicians and Surgeons, now the medical department of Columbia College, and there

spent three years of study, receiving his degree as Doctor in Medicine, on the 29th of March, 1825.

After a few months of preliminary practice near Greenwich, at the request of friends he settled in Wilton, Fairfield County, Conn., and there pursued his professional duties until the spring of 1832, when he returned to New York, and on December 26th, 1833, was married to Katharine VanVliet DeWitt, daughter of Peter DeWitt, counsellor-at-law in New York City. During the following year, again yielding to the desire of many friends, Doctor Mason removed to Brooklyn, N. Y., of which place he thus became a resident in the very year (1834) that it first received a city charter, and where he passed the remainder of his long life, witnessing, and in no small degree contributing to, the growth and development of the city, from a town of about 24,000 inhabitants to a city of over 650,000 residents, and from a district of considerable extent, but thinly scattered population, to a compact and beautiful city, filled with all the evidences and results of the prosperity and wealth which characterize the third largest city in the Union.

IN the beginning of his practice in Brooklyn, Doctor Mason became a member of the Kings County Medical Society, in which for many years he was quite active, securing, with others, the establishment of the journal entitled "The Transactions of the Kings County Medical Society," in which are annually published the records of the investigations of the Society in the various departments of medical science. He was also twice elected President of the Society, serving during the years 1842 and 1843. At the time of his death only two of his brother practitioners, Doctor F. W. Ostrander and Doctor W. G. Hunt, had been longer members of the Society than himself, his connection with it extending over forty-eight years, of which all but the last two years were passed in active professional work, making his entire professional life over fifty-five years in duration.

AT the time when Doctor Mason settled in Brooklyn, the city had no provision for the care of her sick poor—a measure which, with her rapidly-growing population, soon came to be a pressing necessity. Following, therefore, the suggestion made by Doctor Isaac J. Rapelyea,

their President, in an inaugural address delivered before them July 13th, 1835, the Medical Society of the County of Kings appointed a committee, consisting of Doctors Mason, Wendall, Rapelyea, Marvin, Fanning, Finck, and Boyd, to prepare a memorial to the Common Council of the city, proposing the establishment of a city hospital for the care of the sick poor and strangers. The paper was duly submitted to the Society, and being adopted by them was presented to the Common Council, but no immediate results followed. An accident which occurred nearly four years later drew public attention again to the subject, and the necessity of some public institution for the reception of cases of accidental injuries or disabling sickness being warmly urged, the Common Council, under the influence of the Hon. Cyrus P. Smith, then Mayor of the city, appropriated a small annual sum for the support of a city hospital, called at that time, from its location, the "Adams Street Hospital." A competent staff of physicians and surgeons was organized, on which Doctor Mason received an appointment as Senior Attending Surgeon, being also elected President of the Board. For some years the

city appropriation was regularly paid, and the institution exerted its beneficent influences in the community. In 1844, however, this public aid was withdrawn, and the doors of the hospital consequently were closed. But its necessity was too apparent to allow this useful charity to long remain inactive, and in 1845 the "Brooklyn City Hospital" was incorporated by an Act of the Legislature, and many of the former medical staff were reappointed, including Doctor Mason, who reassumed his position as Senior Surgeon. In 1848 the hospital was endowed by the liberality of Augustus Graham, Esq., with a considerable sum of money, which, added to some public donations and the appropriation from the city, enabled it to erect suitable buildings on Raymond Street, near Washington Park (or Fort Greene, as it is more popularly called), and to begin a course of usefulness and prosperity which still continues.

Doctor Mason labored for years both in general activity and professional services in behalf of the Institution, until failing health compelled him to resign his connection with it.

FOR some time Doctor Mason's health remained impaired in consequence of the excessive

demands that had been made upon it by his untiring activity in his private and public occupations, and the anxiety and deep depression produced by severe domestic calamity; but no sooner were his physical powers somewhat re-established, than his wonted energy in the supplying of public needs displayed itself anew. In connection with several leading physicians of Brooklyn he devised the plan of establishing in that city an Institution which should unite, under the control of one corporation, the combined advantages of a Hospital and a Medical School, the students of which should be enabled to study at the very bedsides of the sick, and thus conjoin most effectively a theoretical and practical training for the future discharge of their professional duties.

This design was realized by the incorporation, in March, 1858, of the "Long Island College Hospital," the first Medical School in the United States to make practical and successful use of the principle of instruction above alluded to, and whose subsequent prosperity has amply proved the value of this new departure in the methods of medical education.

Doctor Mason was not only actively engaged



in perfecting the plan of organization, and in devising and executing the preliminary details, but in the many dark hours of doubt and despondency which always attend new enterprises of any permanent worth, his useful counsel and firm determination were found to be of invaluable assistance in the prosecution of the design. He was one of the incorporators of the Institution, and was chosen by his colleagues as the first President of the Collegiate Department, an office which he continued to administer until a year before his death, thus discharging its duties for a period of twenty-one years, during which time between six hundred and seven hundred graduates of the College received their degree of Doctor in Medicine from his hands, and rarely without some accompanying words from him of appropriate and useful advice.

During the war of the Rebellion the Long Island College Hospital was forward in its offers of assistance to the Federal Government in the care of the sick and wounded men of the United States army and navy who were sent from the front to Northern and Eastern States for medical treatment, and received its full quota of such patients, continuing its helpful

offices in this regard as long as any of the hospitals in the vicinity.

Doctor Mason was extremely active in the direction of the care of these inmates of the Hospital, and almost daily gave his personal attention to this patriotic work, evincing, in his treatment of these defenders of their country, his entire and warm sympathy with the cause for which they suffered. In all his efforts he was ably seconded by his colleagues in the Institution, and when the troops were finally withdrawn from the various hospitals to whose care they had been consigned, the army medical officers closed their supervision of the treatment of the men allotted to the Long Island College Hospital with words of heartiest commendation.

IT was about this time also that the project of a much needed reform in the sanitary regulations of the cities of New York and Brooklyn, and their vicinity was strongly agitated, and in 1864, by special request, Dr. Mason accompanied to Albany a committee of the Citizens' Association of New York City, to aid in securing the passage of a Metropolitan Health Bill. On its

enactment, and the appointment, under its provisions, of a Board of Health, consisting of seven citizens of the Metropolitan Health District (comprising the counties of New York, Kings, and Richmond), Doctor Mason was nominated and recommended by a large number of the most prominent and respectable medical, professional and mercantile residents of the city, for the position of Health Commissioner of Brooklyn. He accepted the nomination, but soon finding that the contest for the appointment was assuming a purely political aspect, and not desiring to engage in a competition of that nature, he withdrew from the canvass. The sanitary laws of the city, however, enlisted his attention, and still bear to some extent the impress of his advice.

Doctor Mason was a permanent member of the Medical Society of the State of New York, whose "Transactions," published during the earlier period of his membership, record his interest in the work of the Society in the many important measures connected with it in which his name is conspicuous.

He was also a member of the American Med-

ical Association ; a delegate to the International Medical Convention held in Philadelphia in the Centennial year (1876), and a Resident Fellow of the New York Academy of Medicine.

### III.

BUT DOCTOR MASON was not only an indefatigable worker in his own peculiar profession, whether in its private or public exercise. His sympathies and energies, tireless and seemingly exhaustless when employed in congenial labor, went out to every form of activity which had for its object the elevation or the benefiting of his fellow-beings. He was not only prominent as a wise and kind physician, but was noted also for his zeal and efficiency in every branch of humane effort.

ONE of the first philanthropic organizations outside of those of a strictly professional nature into which he entered was the "American Colonization Society," an association that has for many years been engaged in practically solving the great problem of how to civilize and evangelize the vast areas of the Dark Continent. Organized in 1816 by American philanthropists

for the purpose of affording the negro race in America an opportunity to enjoy in their native land the privileges which were then denied them in the United States, in 1822 it founded upon territory acquired from the native chiefs of Upper Guinea the Republic of Liberia, which has since steadily though slowly grown in importance as a means of introducing western and Christian civilization and religion among the natives of the eastern coast of Africa. Embracing in its membership from the very first many men prominent in every profession and walk of life (its President for many years being Henry Clay), the Colonization Society has commended itself at all times to the philanthropic and religious classes of the community.

Doctor Mason first became concerned in it by connecting himself with the New York State Colonization Society in 1852, and three years later he joined the national organization as a life-member. His interest and assistance were ever warmly enlisted in the operations of the Society, and his attendance on its annual meetings interrupted only by unavoidable detentions. His zeal in behalf of its work was suitably acknowledged by the Society, by electing

him in 1874 as one of its Vice-Presidents, which brought him into the companionship in their common efforts of such men as William E. Dodge, Henry G. Marquand, Ex-Governor Horatio Seymour; Secretary of State of the United States, Frederick T. Frelinghuysen; the Reverend Doctors S. Irenæus Prime, and Henry Highland Garnet of New York City; the Protestant Episcopal Bishops, Stevens and Howe of Pennsylvania, and Bedell of Ohio; President Robinson of Brown University, Commodore Shufeldt of the United States Navy, and many others whose names are known and honored throughout the land.

Amid such associates Doctor Mason was respected and his counsel prized, as is indicated by the tone of the minute adopted in regard to him at the annual meeting of the Society next succeeding his decease, which declares that

“He was esteemed as one whose counsels were wise, and whose industry was indefatigable. Of pure and lofty aims he imparted his enthusiasm to those around him. The Society laments in common with many who enjoyed his practical beneficence, prized his friendship, and looked to him for vigorous co-operation.”



BUT while his sympathies and assistance were called into action for objects like that of the Colonization Society, of wide scope and far-reaching effect, Doctor Mason was never unmindful of the claims of interests immediately surrounding him.

The beauty and rapid growth of the city of which he was for so many years a resident were sources of no little gratification to him, and perhaps especially so since he himself had "grown with the growth and increased with the strength" of the fair metropolis which was his home.

And as time and strength permitted him he was always foremost in the inception or carrying out of any project which tended to subserve the true well-being of the body, mind or soul of those around him. His early education and constant love for literature and scholarship, moreover, rendered him particularly friendly to any organization whose design was to increase the intellectual culture of its members; and so when, in 1863, a number of gentlemen decided to found in Brooklyn an Historical Society, whose object should be the collection and preservation of the material and literary records of the city and the outlying Island of which it

is the metropolis, and by these and other appropriate means to form a center of educational and literary influences for the entire city, it is not at all singular that Doctor Mason should have been one of the first invited to participate in the realization of the design, nor that he should have entered into the plan with all his customary ardor and intelligence. The Society was incorporated in April, 1863, under the title of the "Long Island Historical Society," and its object declared to be "to discover, procure, and reserve whatever may relate to general history, to the natural, civil, ecclesiastical, and literary history of the United States and the State of New York, and more particularly of the counties, cities, towns and villages of Long Island." Among its incorporators appear the names of the Hon. J. Carson Brevoort, the Hon. Henry C. Murphy, the Hon. John Greenwood, Prof. Charles E. West, the Rev. Dr. Richard S. Storrs, Jr., Alden J. Spooner, Esq., Joshua M. Van Cott, Esq., Theodore L. Mason, M.D., the Rev. Dr. William Ives Budington, Henry C. Pierrepont, Esq., and other men whose names are well known and highly honored among their fellow-citizens as synonymous with

public spirit, intelligence, and zeal in every good word and work. Doctor Mason was not only an incorporator of the Historical Society, but a member of its first Board of Directors, retaining the position through many successive annual elections, and contributing not a little to the success of the movement, until the Society had reached the firm footing upon which it now stands as a permanent and powerful means for the education and elevation of all those who come within the sphere of its influence. Other duties and enterprises then demanding his attention, although his interest in the Society still continued undiminished, his activity in its work largely decreased, since it was a noticeable trait in his character that no sooner was the success of any particular project in which he was interested assured, and only the routine work of sustaining and applying well-understood principles and methods remained to be done, than he usually diverted his energies into some fresh channel of usefulness. For one secret of his power for good among his fellows undoubtedly was his unusual ability as a leader and pioneer in new and untried paths, where his foresight, energy, intelligence, steadfast deter-

mination amid opposition and unwavering hopefulness under difficulties, were weapons by whose use he was accustomed to reduce chaos to order, and to establish certainty in the place of doubt.

BUT perhaps the most important of the many philanthropic measures in which Doctor Mason was from time to time engaged was one which did not enlist his energies until the closing years of his life. Of him, as of many another man, it might truthfully be said that his greatest work was also his last.

Throughout his life he had been a man not only of very well defined views as to the distressing and injurious effects of the excessive use of alcoholic stimulants, and himself, both by precept and example, a strict and total abstainer from their habitual use in every form, but the repression of the vice which lies at the root of the wilful use of intoxicants, and more particularly the proper method of remedying as far as possible the disastrous physical and mental effects which inevitably follow the indulgence of this morbid appetite, were subjects to which his attention was largely directed during the last sixteen years of his life.

Up to about the year 1850 those who were combating that great enemy of mankind, intemperance, for the most part, had proceeded upon the supposition that this evil was largely, if not altogether, a moral and mental obliquity—a vice and crime against nature to be prevented and cured, if at all, by moral and intellectual means.

Taking it for granted that those who, under the influence of their own free will, had degraded themselves, impaired their physical systems and imperilled their mental and moral powers, could, by the determined exercise of this same will-power, refrain from the evil habit that had overthrown them, and by the use of mental and spiritual agencies alone regain their forfeited self-control, the temperance reformation, which, arising in America in the first years of the present century, and gathering fresh force in its onward career, is still sweeping with grand and constantly accumulating power over the land, made use mainly of exhortation, argument and educational and religious influences to attain its object.

That these are the appropriate weapons for the prevention and final suppression of the

evil against which they have already dealt such destructive blows was never disputed by any who, as Doctor Mason, were sincere well-wishers to the cause of temperance in whatever form it might put forth its energies. But the point on which, about a quarter of a century ago, not a few scientific and professional men began to take issue with the leaders of the temperance movement was as to the *reformation* of those who had *already fallen* under the assaults of their terrible and merciless enemy. The adherents of the old régime still insisted that the work of repairing his shattered mental and bodily powers, and of replacing the victim of strong drink in the position which had been lost through his fatal indulgence, could be accomplished solely by moral suasion and the use of the will-power. Those who differed with them based their dissent on the fact which they claimed to exist, that though the habit of indulgence in intoxicants may thus be checked if taken in time yet the *confirmed inebriate* has *lost* his will-power, and has therefore become absolutely incapable of personally controlling his appetite for alcoholic liquors, or of escaping the direful effects of his indulgence in them.

To use Doctor Mason's own words on this subject—in his address, “Inebriety a Disease,” he says (pp. 20–21):

“It is the well-known, prominent, and peculiar property of alcohol, in whatever quantities, form, or admixture, to beget in the great majority of men who partake of it, a desire for its *repeated use*. It is doubtless owing to this peculiar quality, and to *another fact*, that not only its repeated use, but its use in increasing quantities, is necessary in order to secure its special effects, that the habit of using it to intoxication is, sooner or later, formed, and the man becomes an inebriate.

“This habit, however, in its primary stages, is not uncontrollable by the subject of it. He has not yet lost the power of restraint over himself, nor is he necessarily incapable of understanding its debasing and destructive nature, or the cogency of the reasons why he should abandon it, but prefers to indulge his appetite. He knowingly exposes himself to temptation and the danger attendant upon indulgence. Use begets habit, and he becomes an inebriate, and in him *Inebriety* is a *Vice*.

“But this vicious habit thus engendered, if persisted in, sooner or later develops the full specific effects of the poisonous draught; and signally, and in a degree and order and with a rapidity modified

by the constitutional tendencies of the subject, it affects the great nervous centers, deranging their nutrition, destroying their normal and healthy functions, and, if not arrested, ultimately engendering in them organic and fatal disorder. This man is an Inebriate, and his *Inebriety* is a DISEASE. He is no longer capable of sound reasoning. He has become insensible to the appeals of duty and affection, to the claims of his family, his fellow-men, his own welfare, or his duty to his Maker. Or if, in some more rational interval, his conscience, somewhat denarcotized, awakes to reproach him, he weeps and prays and resolves, and falls before the first temptation, and yields to the terrible, unendurable craving for the poisonous beverage, helpless, hopeless (so far as his own power is concerned), a 'Dipsomaniac' most appropriately so called."

Inasmuch, however, as he who thus becomes a slave to the awful thralldom of alcohol is afflicted *physically* with a *true disease* medically termed "Dipsomania," so Doctor Mason proceeds to assure us that there is ground for the hope that scientific and intelligent treatment may relieve such an one wholly or in part, and thus the possibility of a cure for Inebriety or Dipsomania is declared to be a fact.



These three points then :—

*First.* That alcohol is a *poison*, producing when introduced into the human system profound physical disturbance.

*Secondly.* That Inebriety or Habitual Drunkenness is a DISEASE ; and

*Thirdly.* That this disease is curable in the same sense as other diseases are curable,—form the basis of a movement in the medical profession of America and England, in whose first beginnings Doctor Mason was profoundly interested, and in the formulating and practical application of whose principles he exerted no small influence. It will be perceived that the basis of this scientific view of the temperance question is radically different from that of those methods of temperance work which make use of simply moral means for the attainment of their object, though both classes of effort are employed in combating the same great evil, and both have the same general design in view : the abatement and final extinction of this curse of the human race.

The two systems, the scientific and the moral, are therefore correlative and not at all antagonistic. Nevertheless they are distinct. The

one—the moral system—is first *preventative*, and then restorative, and its methods of correction and restraint are such as appeal to the head and the heart ; while the other—the scientific or medical system—is primarily *restorative* and secondarily preventative by adding to the ranks of the temperance army those who, being mindful “of the rock whence they were hewn, and the hole of the pit whence they were digged,” will ever be the experienced and zealous advocates of the strictest abstinence ; and also by decreasing the number of the victims of that frightful curse of the hereditary taint through which—like the corrupted blood of the leper—the loathsome effects of the alcoholic poison descend from the drunkard to the generations following him, and according to the stern retribution of impartial justice, literally cause the sins of the fathers to be visited upon the children unto the “third and fourth generation” of such as hate and set at naught the law of God written in their physical and mental constitutions.

Such was the work that now employed no small portion of the thought and labor of Doc-

tor Mason, and if its aim and nature have been dwelt upon somewhat minutely it has been that his views and principles in regard to this most important subject may be so clearly seen that the reason for his earnestness and devotion to this branch of professional and philanthropic effort may be correctly apprehended.

It was about the year 1865 that his attention was first seriously directed toward this movement, and scarcely had he mastered the principles above alluded to than an opportunity was offered for their application.

Rejoiced at the new and largely untrodden field thus open to him for the exercise of that experience and ability in organizing and directing untried enterprises which was so marked a feature in his character, he entered heartily into the prosecution of this work.

Associating himself with a number of gentlemen principally residents of Brooklyn, among whom were Ex-Mayor George Hall, Hon. John Dikeman, Rev. Dr. (now Bishop) John A. Paddock, J. S. T. Stranahan, Esq., the Rev. John Willets, and others who had become interested in this subject, it was determined by them to erect an Institution for the reclamation and

cure of Inebriates, and in May, 1866, was incorporated "The Inebriates' Home for Kings County."

Temporary accommodations were at once provided and speedily filled to repletion with those desirous of treatment. A grant of a fixed percentage of the excise funds of the city was given to the Institution by the Legislature, and after the experience of some years had demonstrated the correctness of the principles of treatment involved, and the field which had developed for their application, a permanent edifice, erected by means of a special appropriation by the Legislature of some thousands of dollars, and arranged to subserve the specific purposes for which it was designed, was built at Fort Hamilton, L. I., not far from the city of Brooklyn, situated upon the banks of the famous Narrows of New York harbor, and embracing in the view from its commanding site the islands, waters and cities which combine to form the unique and splendid panorama of the environs of the metropolis of the New World.

In the organization and oversight of this Institution Doctor Mason was ever most active and efficient. As President and Consulting

Physician he was diligent, faithful, and wise in the discharge of every duty connected with the Institution; was familiar with its management; defended and advanced its interests in every possible way, and in conjunction with his associates therein, won for it a reputation and a degree of success and influence which has been very marked.

For this Institution, though not the pioneer of its class in point of time, became the leader and model for Inebriate Asylums wherever founded, and its acknowledged success has promoted greatly the extension and confirmation of public and professional sentiment in favor of the principles it represents and advocates.

But in the prosecution of this philanthropic measure, Doctor Mason was not contented with exertions of a merely local nature. Thoroughly believing in their beneficial effects he aimed to extend the influences of the "Disease Theory" as widely as possible. To the accomplishment of this design he was active in organizing in 1870 the "American Association for the Cure of Inebriates," whose avowed ob-

jects, as set forth in the Plan of Organization adopted by them, were "to study the *disease* of Inebriety, to discuss its proper treatment, and to endeavor to bring about a coöperative public sentiment and jurisprudence."

In the formation of this Association Doctor Mason was associated with such men of prominence in professional and other circles, as Doctors Willard Parker, Sr., and Elisha Harris, of New York ; Doctor Joseph Parrish, of Pennsylvania ; Doctors T. D. Crothers and J. E. Turner, of Connecticut ; and Doctor Albert Day, of Massachusetts.

In 1875 Doctor Mason was chosen President of the Association, retaining this position for several successive years. In his second anniversary address delivered as President before the Association at its annual meeting held in Chicago, Illinois, in September, 1877, he took for his topic "The Disease Theory of Inebriety," entitling the paper, "Inebriety a Disease." In this form his arguments and proofs of the correctness of the theory were given to the press, and speedily won their way not only to those interested in the subject in the United States, but passing beyond seas, met with repeated and

favorable notice abroad, were quoted as authority in the House of Commons of the Parliament of Great Britain, by members of that body who were engaged in advocating a measure for the governmental support of institutions similar to the Inebriate Asylums which had already been established in America, and exerted no small influence, even on the Continent, among those who were giving thought to that method of the cure of intemperance which is suggested and explained by the paper, and enforced by the practical exemplification of the principles to which it refers.

Doctor Mason also prepared other papers upon the same subject of Inebriety in its various aspects, all of which are suggestive and valuable, in the consideration of the particular subjects of which they treat.

#### IV.

BUT we now approach a topic whose apprehension is vital to a right understanding of the character and life-work of the subject of this sketch,—his religious views and principles. Here we find the secret of his usefulness, the

power which sustained and guided him through the long years of his beneficent and honored life. It was an unassuming but also unwavering assurance of the authority and value of the great truths of Christianity that formed a firm foundation upon which he erected a character of singular uprightness and beneficence. An unfeigned piety deep-hidden but powerful, ever ran through his life from early manhood to old age, keeping fresh and beautiful those kindly and generous traits which so many suffer to become buried beneath the cares of this world, or to disappear under the fierce rays of worldly temptations or unholy passions.

In his youth, Doctor Mason, as we have seen, enjoyed the companionship and all those accompanying examples and influences which one so eminent for piety and intelligence as his venerated grandfather, the Reverend Doctor Lewis, was so peculiarly qualified to impart, and often did Doctor Mason mention the benefits which he had experienced in being thus early brought under the influence of him whom, in a letter written late in his own life, he well characterized as "a wise and godly man, a man of extraordi-



nary excellence, whose memory I cherish with reverence, gratitude and affection to this hour."

Still, possibly restrained by the somewhat strict conservatism which marked society at the period of his earlier life, he did not for years make any formal profession of his religious faith, although at no time was his conduct unmarked by the greatest regard for religion and the most careful observance of its outward proprieties, notwithstanding the fact that at the very time when he was at the age of the greatest susceptibility to moral impressions, the Continental infidelity of the early part of this century was bringing its influence to bear most powerfully upon the educated youth of America.

Just when he took the final and irrevocable step of publicly acknowledging his personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and of thus placing himself openly upon the Lord's side, can not now be accurately determined, although it probably occurred not far from the year 1830 or 1831, and was in some Presbyterian Church in New York City.

But the stand once taken, Doctor Mason with his characteristic firmness of purpose never forsook it, and through the fifty years and more

during which his life was afterward prolonged he was not only a pronounced, but an *active* Christian man.

His connection, however, with the church which he first joined was comparatively short, closing soon after his removal to Brooklyn, to the First Presbyterian Church of which city, then under the pastorate of the Rev. Samuel H. Cox, D.D., he transferred his relation on the ninth of July, 1835.

Notwithstanding his rapidly growing practice, which enlarged proportionately with the fast increasing population of the city, and despite his activity in the various philanthropic and professional enterprises which we have noticed, and the tax laid upon his time and his not too robust strength by the demands of family cares, and the private interests of the many friends who sought his advice and aid, Doctor Mason never allowed any other duty to seriously interfere with the discharge of his religious obligations. Often indeed as he was interrupted by unforeseen and unavoidable professional exigencies, the necessity must be imperative which could cause him to absent himself from his place at the church service or the weekly meet-

ing for prayer and conference, and throughout a life unusually full of active and onerous employments it was his habitual and constant practice to so arrange his duties that as far as possible his public devotional exercises might be regularly engaged in, and although at one period of his life there was perhaps no physician in the city of Brooklyn whose practice was more extended, or whose time was more employed than that of Doctor Mason, yet just at that time was his activity in the work of the church more marked if possible than at any other time of his life. The example thus set might well be emulated and imitated by those who are wont to endeavor to excuse themselves for their dereliction in spiritual duties by pleading the exactions of professional or business life.

In 1841 he was elected a Deacon in the First Presbyterian Church of Brooklyn. It was not without feelings of great reluctance, as he himself testified, that he consented to assume the responsibilities thus imposed upon him, for, as with most men who are really valuable in their several spheres of activity, he was self-depreciative by nature, and unwilling to be made prominent in any enterprise while others could be

found qualified and willing to perform the necessary work connected therewith.

But the representations of his pastor, Doctor Cox, for whom he always had the highest regard, prevailed upon him and he was ordained to the office to which he had been chosen on February 28th, 1841. From this date to the close of his life—over forty years—he was never out of office as Deacon or Elder in the several churches of which he was successively a member, and for the larger portion of the time was actively employed in discharging the duties of these positions.

AT the time of which we speak there was no church in Brooklyn of the Congregational denomination.

It is true that in 1785 an independent Society adhering to the Congregational polity had been organized, but its existence had been brief, and the building which it had erected on Fulton Street as a place of worship, had long since passed into the hand of some members of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and had been occupied by the congregation which was afterward reorganized under the name of St. Ann's Church,

the mother-church of the Episcopal denomination in Brooklyn.

It was, however, noticeable to those interested in such matters that among the large number of people settling in the infant city, there were very many from the New England States who had been accustomed to worship according to the Congregational methods, and whose early associations strongly attached them to the distinctive polity and faith of that branch of the Church of Christ.

Doctor Mason's younger life having been passed in closest intimacy with these forms of worship and government, his preferences had ever been strongly inclined thereto, and although these feelings had not in the least interfered with his perfect concord in the worship and work of the Presbyterian churches of which he had been a member, he perceived that not only did the growth of the city demand increased church accommodations, but that the organization of a Congregational Church might be the means of attracting and holding in church-fellowship many who would not so readily become attached to denominations with which they were unfamiliar.

Upon the mutual discovery that not a few Brooklynites of New England and Congregational lineage held similar views regarding these matters, it was determined to call a meeting of those interested in the project of establishing the Church of their fathers in their new-found home, and although the appointed evening January 25th, 1844, was inclement, enough enthusiasm was manifested by those present to determine them to proceed to carry out the design which had called them together. A committee was appointed to obtain subscriptions for the erection of a "meeting-house," and the work of arranging the requisite preliminaries went steadily forward.

The enterprise was especially noticeable for the breadth and boldness of its design. Most similar organizations are content to begin on a very moderate basis, and to expand in their social influences and spiritual power as after-circumstances may determine or permit. But the gentlemen who were the founders of the first Congregational Church in Brooklyn, with unusual penetration foresaw that to successfully gain and occupy the position which they deemed belonged of right to the only represent-

ative in Brooklyn of the ancient and worthy polity of the New England fathers, the organization must at once and vigorously take possession of the vantage-ground open to it, ere it should be occupied by some other denomination, or, as was far more likely, parcelled out among the representatives of many different religious societies. To do this, however, required the erection, not merely of a comfortable place of worship, but of a building which should compare favorably with any then existing or likely to be constructed for some time to come, and the calling to the pastorate of the infant enterprise not merely a pious and faithful minister, but one who could add to the spiritual qualifications essential to every preacher of righteousness, a mental and social culture and intellectual ability which would from the very first give that weight of character and influence to the Church which, if not secured at the beginning of its existence, would probably be afterward unattainable.

Both of these requisites were most happily and successfully secured.

By the energetic efforts of those interested, a building was erected on the corner of Henry and Remsen Streets, which though completed

in 1846 still enjoys a reputation for massive beauty and appropriateness which is second to none of the nearly three hundred church-buildings which adorn the "City of Churches," and he who after a lapse of forty-seven years still occupies the pastorate to which he was called as the first minister of the Church, has for years been a controlling power not only in the especial province of his ministerial labors, but as a leader, and guide and inspiration in all the literary and intellectual enterprises which have beautified and ennobled the city of his adoption.

In all the preliminary consultations and actions which resulted in the establishment of this Church, which in time became the source and mother-church of Congregationalism in Brooklyn and New York cities, and in all the regions south of the New England States, Doctor Mason bore no inconspicuous nor unworthy part.

Assistant from the very first with his advice and coöperation, his abilities in counsel and direction were readily acknowledged by his companions, and at the organization of the Church, on the two hundred and twenty-fourth anniver-



sary of the landing of the Pilgrims, December 22d, 1844, when twenty-two persons were formally associated into a "Church of Christ according to the Congregational usage and polity," and under the title of "The Church of the Pilgrims," Richard P. Buck, Esq., and Theodore L. Mason, M.D., were elected the Deacons of the newly-formed Church, while Doctor Mason was furthermore entrusted with the chairmanship of the Committee of the Church, which, together with the Committee of the Society, forms, according to the Congregational method of church government, the executive power upon which devolves the carrying out of the decisions of the entire body. He held this position when, in 1846, the church and society extended a call to their pastorate to the Reverend Richard S. Storrs, Jr., then of Brookline, Mass. It was in June of the year mentioned that this call was first offered and declined; but so strong did the convictions of the members of the Church continue as to the desirability of securing the young and talented pastor of Brookline, that in November of the same year it was renewed and strenuously urged, and finally, to the great gratification of the Church,

was accepted, with the happy consequences which are even yet so apparent.

In attaining this result Doctor Mason was energetic and helpful. In company with other members of the Church of the Pilgrims, he visited Mr. Storrs and his father, the venerated Doctor Storrs, of Braintree, Mass., and by his arguments and his representations of the needs and advantages of the Brooklyn field of labor, probably contributed not a little to the attainment of the determination which was at last reached. He also presented the necessities and claims of Pilgrim Church before an Advisory Council which had been summoned to aid in the decision of the important question of the removal of Mr. Storrs to Brooklyn—a question important, because in no small degree there depended upon it, not merely the success of the local church, but the power and influence of New England religious thought and culture throughout these metropolitan cities of New York and Brooklyn, and the widespread regions under their influence. And when finally the pastor of their choice took up his residence among the friends and members of Pilgrim Church, for many years Doctor Mason as an officer and member

of the Church rendered to the furtherance of the objects of the organization efficient and not soon to be forgotten aid.

AFTER some time, however, events transpired and positions were assumed among his fellow-members in the Church of the Pilgrims with which Doctor Mason could not concur.

Unwilling, therefore, to continue relations which had ceased to be entirely pleasant or profitable to himself or to others, in 1863 he once more and for the last time transferred his church-fellowship, joining the First Reformed Dutch Church, then under the pastoral care of the Reverend A. A. Willets, D.D. Here he soon again found active employment in ecclesiastical affairs, being elected an Elder of the Church, March 12th, 1866, the duties of which office he continued to discharge, with but few interruptions, to the end of his life, a period of nearly sixteen years. His experience in church work, his deep interest in everything pertaining to the kingdom of Christ, his wide liberality of sentiment toward those who differed with him in non-essentials, his intelligent and useful counsels and the generosity with which he ever aided all

wise efforts for the good of others, gave him no little influence, not only in the particular church, but in the venerable and conservative denomination of which he had become a member. The Church called him to various important positions of usefulness, in some respects the most important which she could bestow upon her lay members. He frequently represented the First Church in Classis, and was often delegated by that body to the sessions of the Particular and General Synods.

In 1866 he was made an Honorary Member of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Reformed Church in America. The direct contact into which he was thus brought, with the work of preaching the Gospel to the heathen, added to the life-long and intelligent interest with which he had viewed the working out of the Church's Great Commission, attached him very strongly to the duties thus laid upon him, and excited in him a zealous activity in their discharge which ceased only with his life.

In 1876 he was elected Vice-President of the Board, and in 1879 Chairman of the Executive Committee, and thus for the space of some three years stood with his hand upon the very

levers of the entire Foreign Missionary work of a Church which, in proportion to its home strength, has *not* been "among the least of the princes of Judah" in preparing an highway for her God amid the spiritual wastes of heathendom.

To missionaries of all kinds, but especially to those who labored in the foreign field, Doctor Mason was always a warm friend; entertaining almost a personal interest in each with whom he became acquainted. His sympathies, his counsels, his prayers, and his purse were ever devoted to their welfare, and he was rarely better satisfied than when he could aid in strengthening the work of the Board or extending its scope, or could enlist in its behalf the energies and gifts of his brethren in the Church.

And such sympathetic and wise co-operation responsively evoked the love and confidence of those with whom he labored, and for whose welfare he acted. Among the many letters of condolence received by his family after Doctor Mason's death, one of the earliest, considering the distance from which it came, was from a young missionary in Japan, who, on the first intelligence of his death, wrote to say, "We mis-

sionaries feel that we have lost a wise and earnest friend," and to add on his own behalf, although he had only the slightest personal acquaintance with the Doctor: "I felt at my first introduction to him that he was my friend, and I have ever since carried a pleasant remembrance of him with me. I feel that I have lost a personal friend."

The expressions of the minute adopted by his associates in the Foreign Board furthermore indicate the regard in which they held him, and most aptly summarize the nature and extent of his relation to the work in which they were unitedly engaged. Says the resolution :

"For nearly sixteen years Doctor Mason served the Church in her work of Foreign Missions. He was faithful in all required duty, ardent and fully consecrated. We found him wise in counsel, fertile in expedients, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost. His courage in the face of difficulties never faltered ; while his zeal, tempered by sound judgment, made him the advocate of a safe conservatism. He was most impressive in the strength and manliness of his Christian character. His life was the Christian's testimony to the power of Divine truth. The universal Gospel of the kingdom was all and in all to him. Familiar with science, and no stranger to its

assaults upon Christianity, he remained firm with an abiding faith in the Word of God as a Divine revelation. He felt, too, that he held this truth as a secure trust for all the nations of the earth. 'He rests from his labors and his works do follow him.'"

## V.

AND NOW a word must be spoken which is more difficult to utter fitly than any which has preceded. Hitherto we have dealt only with the external facts of Doctor Mason's life. But in order to understand the true nature and bearing of these facts it is necessary that we penetrate somewhat beneath the surface, and see the principles which actuated them, since thus alone can the record of this life be made of any real value to us who may desire to emulate its singular beauty and worth.

ONE prominent feature of Doctor Mason's character undoubtedly was a mental trait of a twofold nature, a happy combination of quickness and decision in the performance of duty. Preferring to be deliberate when no occasion for haste existed, whenever promptness of thought

and action was demanded his mind and hand moved with a rapidity equalled or surpassed by few indeed of his associates. His well-trained intellect seemed to act at times almost by intuition instead of by logical processes, and to seize with wonderful quickness and certainty upon the pivotal point in the matter before him.

It was this characteristic among others which gave him much of the success which he ever enjoyed in his professional career, and which not unfrequently caused his advice to be sought by his brother practitioners. His deftness and celerity in the sick-room were often remarked, and he would frequently examine the case before him, determine upon and prescribe the required treatment and close his call in far less than the time ordinarily occupied by gentlemen of his profession in similar duties.

His promptness of decision and manual dexterity peculiarly qualified him for the performance of surgical operations, and although he always successfully pursued both a medical and surgical practice, yet his skill and ability more frequently expressed themselves in the latter branch of his profession, and in his connection with public medical institutions he was usually



selected to occupy the part of surgeon rather than that of physician.

And this same rapidity of thought and action displayed itself in whatever sphere of exertion he was engaged. In all the various kinds of effort in which he was from time to time employed, quickness of apprehension and determination and skill in execution were ever characteristic of him. For him to see the necessity was generally to perceive the means of supplying it, and to apprehend these means was to energetically employ them.

ANOTHER feature of Doctor Mason's character was one indispensable to all real success, viz.: unwavering perseverance in the prosecution of any course of action which had been determined upon. Let him be but once assured that the object was right, the methods legitimate, and the motive correct, and then, having put his hand to the plough, he was not wont to look back. Difficulties only aroused in him new zeal, opposition but evoked the greater energy, while disingenuous or hypocritical methods of antagonism awoke within him a fiery indignation which was often scathing in its force. And yet

mingled with this Puritan sternness of purpose there was much also of the Puritan tenderness of heart. For as the hardest rock often yields the freshest and most invigorating draught, so from the nature unused to bow to outward constraint will not seldom flow the most abundant streams of true benevolence of heart.

So it was with Doctor Mason. His firmness of purpose arose from the real strength of his nature, not from that weakness that sometimes puts on the mask of severity of manner that it may hide the defects concealed beneath the impassive exterior. Therefore, when no necessity existed for the exercise of sternness he delighted to unbend into the gentler moods which more became his true feelings.

And those who knew him best saw him most often in the exercise of these milder attributes of his character. His active habits, and the professional and public exactions of his early and middle age, withdrew him to a great extent from the intimacies and attractions of family and domestic life; but when his declining years released him, in some degree, from these detentions, his home became more and more his constant abode and the scene of his labors, while

his presence ever added a new sense of satisfaction and benefit to those who formed his household. And amid the quiet and retirement of the family circle did he ever seek, even from the very first, all the rest and relaxation which his busy life permitted him to enjoy. In his early manhood the Doctor had been fond of society, and his rank in life, education and general culture amply fitted him to adorn and enjoy all suitable social pleasures and especially those which had mingled with them intellectual or spiritual enlivenment, for as to all other sociability it was always most distasteful to him ; but his pressing duties soon forced him to deny himself this form of recreation, and the habits thus abandoned were never afterward re-assumed.

His chief relaxation, for the larger part of his life, was found in reading, and many an hour of weariness and physical pain was thus beguiled until repose followed to refresh and strengthen. Even here, however, his character asserted itself, for his literary culture almost always led him to select for his perusal books of real value either because of their direct information or their mental stimulus, which, with the

current news of the day, formed an intellectual diet in which the purposeless fiction of the modern school found but little place. Above all, his mind was strengthened and his whole character purified and elevated by a constant and familiar acquaintance with the Book of books, which was never supplanted by any other in his affection and esteem. Not only were its language and precepts well known to him, but the principles therein embodied were "lamps unto his feet," and rare indeed was his deliberate action which could not be reconciled with the teachings of the Infallible Standard of faith and practice.

A TRAIT of Doctor Mason's character, which must not be forgotten, was his warm and profound sympathy with misfortune and need.

It was the constant demand made upon the benevolence of the medical profession by the sick poor who sought their aid, that drew his attention, with that of others, to the necessity of establishing a city hospital in Brooklyn; but long after ample provision had been made for those whom these institutions are designed to relieve, indeed even to the end of his life, Doc-

tor Mason's door was often opened to the poor, and his face and aid familiar in many an abode of poverty and distress.

But this was only one form of need to which his helpful sympathies went out.

It was his strong appreciation of the moral and spiritual necessities of the slave race that led him early to aid the work of the Colonization Society. It was this same clear apprehension of real need, joined with a firm belief in the divine authority of the command, "Go ye and teach all nations," that impelled him to throw himself, heart and soul, into the grand work of Foreign Missions, wisely and bravely and firmly—to use the figure of William Carey—"holding the ropes for those who go down into the perilous though rich mines of spiritual wealth," which are being worked by the stout-hearted men and women who bury themselves in the darkness and foulness of heathenism, that they may dig from thence the priceless jewels of redeemed souls, with which to adorn the Master's crown. It was, furthermore, his knowledge of the terrible need which exists among those who are bound hand and foot, and ruined in body and soul by the curse of intemperance that aroused

him to apply all his professional ability and his mental and moral prowess to the establishment of the "disease theory" of inebriety, which is, through the instrumentalities which he was among the foremost in establishing, gradually yet surely winning its way to the acceptance of the scientific and medical intelligence of the age.

And it was the compassion which he had for all forms of suffering and want which moved him to freely perform those countless acts of charity and kindness and patient helpfulness which endeared him to so many hearts. No one, however unworthy, was for *that* reason rejected. When deliberate deceit or abuse of his kindness was discovered, he simply withdrew his aid or his confidence, but never sought nor cherished any measures of retaliation. Toward those who deceived and injured him most deeply—and because of his unsuspecting nature these were not few—his spirit was ever that of the Christian who honestly attempts to follow the rule of the Divine Master, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you."

THIS TRAIT of a sympathetic nature will generally be found to be closely allied to the characteristic of liberality of hand as well as of heart, and so displayed itself in him whose character we are considering. Even in its grosser form—financial generosity—it was a marked feature of his history.

Doctor Mason gave, to a large extent, from *principle*, because he felt it was his duty to do so ; but still more largely because of the genuine delight which it afforded him to aid worthy objects and efforts.

And in proportion to his financial means his gifts were large. In the aggregate they must have amounted to thousands of dollars ; but of the exact sum no idea can be had, because of the Doctor's characteristic modesty in the bestowment of his charities, which made the manner of his giving as retiring as its method and purpose were wise. And yet his was not the so-called "open-handed generosity" which bestows its gifts without forethought or discrimination, and gives, as it is said, "without feeling it." Scarcely a dollar was given by him without the design of accomplishing by it some specific good, and so far from giving without feeling it,

it was a cardinal principle, often enforced by him in public and private, that one should continue to give until he *did* feel it ; otherwise, as he thought, the gift could scarcely be dignified with the name of charity, and often did he deny himself some comfort or luxury that the means might be at hand to aid some worthy object.

And his gifts were also *systematically* bestowed. While perhaps it can not be said that he ever preserved a specific ratio between his income and his gifts, preferring to bestow in his charities whatever he could at the time spare for such purposes, yet "hap-hazard" giving was something which he despised, and the Scriptural rule to "lay by in store on the first day of the week as the Lord hath prospered you," while not literally observed, was faithfully followed in the principle involved.

But, as has been said, his pecuniary generosity was only the necessary outcome of the liberality of thought and feeling which moulded his entire life.

With an ardency of spirit which caused him to form strong likes or dislikes he could still readily appreciate and respect honesty and intelligence of purpose, however distasteful to



him in their expression. In religious matters especially was he thus liberal in feeling, as long as those with whom he differed were at variance with him only upon the non-essentials of religion. But whenever the bulwarks of the faith were attacked, or secret or open attempts made to undermine the foundations of the truth, no champion was more keen-sighted than he to detect the danger, none more bold and uncompromising in the defence of the doctrines of the word of God.

WE HAVE before alluded to some of the mental characteristics of Doctor Mason, and particularly to the swiftness and correctness of his judgment and the worth of his counsel.

This was a trait so marked that it rarely failed to attract the attention of his companions, and thus, when acting in conjunction with others, he was usually appealed to for advice even more than for direct exertion. So noticeable indeed was his ability to perceive the difficulties which confronted others, and to suggest the relief therefrom, that it was often said to him : " Doctor, you should have been a lawyer." Perhaps indeed the legal talents and executive abilities

which had so distinguished many of his paternal ancestors had thus impressed themselves upon his character. It is at least certain that his worth as a counsellor gave those who knew him peculiar confidence in him. Often did his friends not only entrust him with the knowledge of their secret troubles and anxieties, but seek his advice to aid them in escaping from their difficulties or to protect them from the dangers of their inexperience; and when we note that in addition to his sound judgment in matters in general he possessed no small degree of business ability, we are not astonished to learn that many a friend and relative made him not only their confidant, but their helper in financial affairs, nor ever regretted their choice of him as the protector of their interests.

AS A public speaker Doctor Mason was not prominent, the most frequent occasions upon which he exercised the very respectable oratorical abilities which he possessed being the successive annual commencement exercises of the Long Island College Hospital, at which he frequently delivered a short address before conferring their degrees upon the graduates, and at

several of which he was the principal speaker of the evening. He also occasionally spoke by invitation on some important topic before one or the other of the various societies with which he was connected. But his life, until its last few years, was far too hurried to allow him the necessary leisure for literary pursuits or even to fix in a permanent form the results of his investigations into medical and other matters with which from time to time he became familiar. His name indeed appeared not unfrequently in print and was sometimes appended to papers of considerable length, but these were generally of a practical character, such as reports of committees which embodied and declared the results of work already accomplished, rather than the theory of efforts yet to be made.

“A Report on the Statutes of the State of New York which regulate the practice of Physic and Surgery; the Rights, Duties and Immunities of Physicians, and their relation to the Medical Societies of the Counties,” which was largely prepared by him for a committee of which he was chairman, for presentation to the Kings County Medical Society, was published in 1858, and was regarded as a forcible and valuable

statement of the subject of medical jurisprudence. This pamphlet, together with the paper already referred to as read before the American Association for the Cure of Inebriety, in 1875, on the subject, "Inebriety a Disease," form the most full and carefully written treatises that he ever prepared; but both of these, and particularly the latter, exerted an influence which serves to show what he might have accomplished through the agency of the press, had circumstances been favorable.

## VI.

AND NOW, where shall we look for the central source of a life so well rounded out in the cheerful and successful performance of duty toward God and man? What was the hidden yet powerful spring that set in motion thought and feeling, speech and action, throughout that long and useful life? Surely it can not be discovered save in the depth and purity of the heartfelt and heart-filling personal piety which was so conspicuous in him. We have already seen the outflowing of this perennial fountain in the philanthropic and Christian activities of

his life. These were not forced, not mere external show, not done to be seen of men. They were the inevitable and natural result of his unfeigned piety, following from it as surely and as unconsciously as from the deep tap-root gathering into itself the forces drawn from the richness of the earth there flows upward the sap which manifests itself in leaf and stalk and flower and perfect fruit. This vital godliness was the inspiration of his early manhood, his strength as he bore "the heat and burden of the day" of his energetic middle life, and the unfailing rod and staff on which he leaned in perfect confidence as the weight of years and trials bowed his declining age.

Writing to one of his sons who, while absent from home at college, was approaching his twenty-first birthday, he said in reference to the occasion: "I can well recollect how I felt when, more than half a century since, a similar event occurred to me. Never before had I so felt my weakness, ignorance and inability to direct my own course. Nor was I ever before sensible how much I had relied on the advice and direction of my good, kind and wise friends. And I think I learned to refer all my interests to my

Heavenly Father more habitually than ever before." And that habit of habitually referring all his cares, anxieties, and interests to his Heavenly Father was perfectly characteristic of him throughout his life. He would often say of a matter in which he was for the time in doubt, "Well, I will think and *pray* over it, and do not doubt but that we shall be led to do right."

And may not the customary accuracy and worth of the decisions thus obtained be rightfully referred not more to the *thought* than to the *prayer*? Indeed we perhaps touch most nearly the real secret of his character when we recall the fact that Doctor Mason was pre-eminently "a man of prayer." He believed thoroughly in its efficacy, and never hesitated to make trial of its power. The "mercy-seat" was no unaccustomed place to him, and its influence was manifest in all his life.

Often wakeful because of physical infirmities, when all around him were wrapped in slumber, he delighted then to "remember his God upon his bed, and to meditate on Him in the night-watches." And so evident was the help that he obtained from this communion with God, that

an inmate of his house, himself far from being a Christian person, could not but confess: "It must be in this that the Doctor finds his wonderful power of endurance and helpfulness."

And so it surely was, and thus is added another testimony from actual experience to the "power of prayer"—that mighty power which, rising from the heart of the prattling child or of the aged saint, reaches the throne of the Highest, and arrays for man's defence and blessing the wisdom and the strength of the Almighty.

SUCH is an outline record of the life and character of Theodore Lewis Mason. No one is more conscious than is the writer of how utterly it fails to give any adequate conception of the loveliness and worth of him whose history has thus briefly been presented.

A life like his can not be photographed by pen and paper. The lineaments may be drawn, but the spirit which gave them intelligence and meaning can never be reinfused. The thousand nameless details which go to make up a man, and, fleeting as they are, form no unimportant part of his influence, can not be caught and

transferred to the written page. The facts of which the life has been composed may be recorded ; the life itself can never be recalled.

But it is likewise a comforting truth that the effects of such a life as that which we have been contemplating can not easily be dissipated and lost. Surely those among whom Doctor Mason passed his life can not readily dismiss its recollection from their minds, or the power of its influence from their hearts. And if their own lives are not the better for having been brought in contact with his ; if their dislike of all that is low, debasing and unworthy is not deepened ; their faith in the holy, the pure, the good and the true, is not strengthened ; and their desire to live for the welfare of their fellow-men and the glory of God, is not made more firm and lasting, it will not be because the life of Theodore Lewis Mason greatly failed in any of these respects.

The last few months of his life were months of severe suffering and extreme weakness. None but those who stood by his bedside from day to day will ever know how patiently he bore it all, how entirely he left himself and all those



for whom he felt concerned in God's hands; how calmly and unshrinkingly he looked forward to that death which his faculties, unimpaired to the last, saw to be inevitably approaching. A severe attack of pneumonia fell upon a constitution already so enfeebled by wasting sickness that it was unable to resist the stroke, and on Sabbath afternoon, February the twelfth, 1882, the kind father, the faithful friend, the beloved physician, the wise counsellor, the earnest Christian "fell asleep" and was not, for God had taken him.

The best summary of his entire life and character is the epithet applied to him by his friend of many years, the Reverend Doctor R. S. Storrs, when he described him as "a Christian gentleman"; and his most befitting epitaph are his own words written in a letter of farewell instructions to his sons:

"To God, my Maker, Redeemer and Sanctifier, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, I commit my spirit, believing that he will keep 'that which I have committed to him' unto and in the Great Day of final account.

"To my children and grandchildren I com-

mend the religion of Jesus Christ. To be a true Christian is the highest, the most blessed attainment of man. I think that I have, in some measure, proved the value of the Christian faith in this life. In severe afflictions it has consoled me. In the prospect of my departure hence it sustains me, and I trust will sustain me.

“My prayer is that all my children may obtain this faith; that they may walk always in the paths of righteousness, and that my grandchildren and descendants to the latest generation may be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”

Such was his living faith, such his dying hope, and such his latest counsels.

To them may be appropriately added only the words of inspiration:

“Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them.”

“There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.”









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